

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 010276
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 010276

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, KE

SUBJECT: DETENTION OF NOVELIST NGUGI WA THIENGO

REF: NAIROBI 273

1. IN DEALING WITH US NEWSPEOPLE LOCALLY EMBASSY SHOULD
USE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE DEVELOPED FOR USE BY DEPT SPOKES-
MAN:

QUESTION: HAS THE DEPARTMENT ANY COMMENT CONCERNING THE
HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS OF THE DETENTION BY KENYAN AUTHORITIES
OF KENYAN NOVELIST NGUGI WA THIENGO, THE AUTHOR OF "PETALS
OF BLOOD."?

ANSWER: WE UNDERSTAND THAT NGUGI HAS BEEN DETAINED BY
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KENYAN AUTHORITIES UNDER THE PUBLIC SECURITY ACT BUT WE
ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY SPECIFIC CHARGES HAVING BEEN FILED
AGAINST HIM. WE ARE INTERESTED IN THE MAINTENANCE OF A
HIGH STANDARD OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ALL COUNTRIES AND OF
COURSE ARE FOLLOWING THIS CASE WITH INTEREST. HOWEVER,
WE HAVE NO SPECIFIC COMMENT AT THIS TIME ON THIS DETENTION.

2. IN CONTACTS WITH GOK OFFICIALS EMBASSY SHOULD NOTE AS
APPROPRIATE THAT IN ABSENCE OF CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST
NGUGI QUESTIONS WILL BE RAISED BY PUBLIC IN US AND

ELSEWHERE ABOUT POSSIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION.

3. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE CONTINUING REPORTS ON
WHEREABOUTS AND CONDITION OF NGUGI, FORMAL OR INFORMAL
CHARGES AGAINST HIM AND LOCAL AND GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES.
DETENTION THUS FAR HAS ATTRACTED ONLY SLIGHT PRESS
COVERAGE IN US BUT INCREASED PRESS AND PUBLIC INTEREST
MAY BE EXPECTED.

CHRISTOPHER

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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